

DECLASSIFIED
PA/HO Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
April 21, 2005

MEMORANDUM

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THE WHITE HOUSE 7643

WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

November 1, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

HENRY A. KISSINGER

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN...

SUBJECT:

The Situation in Uganda

The purpose of this memorandum is to bring you up to date on what is happening in Uganda and what actions we and others have taken. The nature of our future relations with Uganda is presently being reviewed. Ambassador Melady has been brought back from Uganda in order to participate in that review and as soon as it is completed I will submit recommendations for your approval.

1. Tribalism at its Worst

Since his assumption of power in January, 1971, General Idi Amin has been destroying the elite of all tribes not allied or belonging to his own grouping. The judiciary, top civil servants, academics, the limited professional class and senior army and police officers have been Amin's targets. Amin has not had to eliminate whole tribes to insure his control; he has simply eliminated their leadership with little regard for the consequences of wiping out the economic and intellectual backbone of the country.

There are no reliable estimates of deaths. They most probably number several thousand but not above 10,000 in a population of 10 million. This compares with over 100,000 deaths in Burundi where the population was 3.5 million.

If Amin succeeds, his West Nile tribal kinsmen, who represent between 5 and 10% of the country's population, would rule the country. The ill-fated invasion of Uganda by Tanzanian-backed Ugandan dissidents has greatly strengthened Amin and accelerated the elimination of any opposition to him.

2. The Asian Expulsion

Amin's expulsion of Asians is moving apace. Most non-Ugandan Asians should be out of the country by the November 8 deadline. These appear to number 25,000 to 30,000, which is far less than earlier

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estimates of 55,000 expellees. Furthermore, Asians are not being brutalized as they were in the initial stages of the expulsion, probably because of the world's outcry, which included many African leaders.

3. Europeans and Americans in Uganda

As security deteriorated in Uganda, the number of Europeans and Americans resident there declined from an estimated 11,000 in September to 7,800. Our own presence went from 1,000 to about 700; all of our 114 Peace Corps volunteers were withdrawn. The British went from an estimated 7,000 to 5,000 citizens.

The safety of Europeans and Americans does not appear to be a problem right now. Amin has resorted to expelling those foreigners he dislikes and otherwise, has told his troops to lay off whites, whose services the country still needs. In fact, Amin has gone out of his way lately to be friendly to the United States and West Germany, in the hope that we will respond with aid. (For all practical purposes, US aid to Uganda is presently suspended although we have not stopped on-going technical assistance. This subject is now under review.)

4. The Soviet and Arab Presence

Whereas most everyone else -- excluding the French, whose presence has remained at about 200 -- has reduced its presence, our Embassy in Kampala expects the Soviet presence to rise above the present 125. This could result in Sino-Soviet competition between the Soviet-backed Amin versus the Chinese-supported Nyerere of Tanzania. It is too early to speculate on this subject.

In addition, a Libyan contingent (possibly 400 men) remains in Uganda. Both the Egyptians and Libyans have promised Amin assistance, which can only anger Nyerere, who, up to now, has blindly supported the Arab cause against Israel.

5. Future Actions by Amin

Assuming Amin will remain in power, and both State and CIA so believe, it seems likely that Amin will continue to purge Uganda's elite along tribal lines. He is also expected to pursue Africanization programs which will include the takeover of businesses vacated by

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Asians as well as probable future nationalizations affecting the British. Foreign missionaries will probably also come under increasing scrutiny by Amin.

6. US Interests

Our own interests in Uganda are limited to protecting our remaining citizens and maintaining a presence in Uganda, rather than giving free rein to the Soviets, assuming they are responsive to Amin. However, if aid is a prerequisite for a presence, we may not be able to stay in Uganda. This will, of course, be more thoroughly reviewed in the paper for you which will discuss our future policy. This paper should be ready in mid-November.

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Intelligence Information Cable

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CITE TDCS DB-315/08804-72

DIST 19 October 1972

COUNTRY UGANDA
DOI SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1972
SUBJECT APPRAISAL OF SITUATION: DESTRUCTION OF THE UGANDAN ELITE

ACQ

FIELD NO.

SOURCE

ANDERSON _____
HOLDRIDGE _____
HORMATS _____
JORDEN _____
KENNEDY _____
LEHMAN _____
LEVINE _____
NEGROPONTE _____
ODEEN _____
RATNER _____
RONDON _____
SAUNDERS _____
SONNENFELDT _____
V. I. G. _____
WALSH _____

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WHAT IS NOW OCCURRING IN UGANDA IS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE UGANDAN ELITE: THE JUDICIARY, THE TOP CIVIL SERVANTS, THE ACADEMICS, A LIMITED PROFESSIONAL CLASS, AND THE SENIOR ARMY AND POLICE OFFICERS WHO DO NOT COME FROM A WEST NILE TRIBE. THEY ARE BEING ELIMINATED BECAUSE THEY, AND THE TRIBES OF WHICH THEY ARE THE LEADERS AND FAVORITE SONS, POSE A THREAT TO THE CONTINUED CONTROL OF UGANDA BY AMIN'S OWN TRIBE, .

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THE KAKWA, AND HIS WEST NILE ALLIES. IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT AMIN KNOWS MUCH ABOUT CHAKA, THE FOUNDER OF THE ZULU NATION, BUT THE TWO MEN HAVE MUCH IN COMMON. (HEADQUARTERS COMMENT: CHAKA WAS A CHIEF FROM A MINORITY CLAN IN SOUTH AFRICA WHO IN ABOUT 1818 BEGAN CONSOLIDATING THE ZULUS INTO ONE NATION BY WIDESPREAD BLOODSHED AND EXTERMINATION OF HIS ENEMIES. HE WAS MURDERED IN 1828.)

2. THE INDIVIDUALS FROM THE WEST NILE ARE THE NEW ELITE OF UGANDA, AND THEY INTEND TO REMAIN SO. AMIN WAS ONE OF THE FEW HIGH RANKING WEST NILERS IN THE ARMY AT THE TIME OF THE COUP ON 25 JANUARY 1970. THE COUP CHAIN OF COMMAND WENT ALMOST DIRECTLY FROM AMIN TO THE WEST NILE SERGEANTS AND ENLISTED MEN. AMIN OUTFOXED THE NUMERICALLY SUPERIOR ACHOLI, LANGO AND ITESOT MILITARY PERSONNEL AND PRESENTED THEM WITH A FAIT ACCOMPLI. IF FORMER PRESIDENT A. MILTON OBOTE HAD NOT BEEN SUCH A RANK TRIBALIST HIMSELF, THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN TROUBLE. AT THE TIME, HOWEVER, THE CHANGE SEEMED FOR THE BETTER, AND THE ACHOLI, ITESOT, AND OTHER TRIBAL GROUPS WENT ALONG WITH IT. THE LANGO HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO FOLLOW SUIT.

3. WITH MORE PERCEPTION THAT HE SEEMED CAPABLE OF, AMIN SET ABOUT INSURING THE LOYALTY OF THE ARMY. HE REMOVED THOSE OFFICERS HE CONSIDERED DISLOYAL BY WHATEVER MEANS HE DEEMED NECESSARY AND REPLACED THEM WITH MEN HE CONSIDERED LOYAL TO HIM. IN JULY 1970 THE ARMY HAD 99 ACHOLI

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OFFICERS, 50 LANGO, AND 107 WEST NILE; IN JANUARY 1972 THERE WERE 19 ACHOLI OFFICERS, 16 LANGO, AND 222 WEST NILERS. MOST OF THOSE REMAINING ACHOLI AND LANGO OFFICERS ARE IN SUPPORT POSITIONS. THE WEST NILERS, THE MAJORITY OF THEM FORMER WARRANT OFFICERS AND NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS, CONTROL THE TROOPS. AMIN HAS SIMILARLY RIDDLED THE SENIOR POLICE RANKS ALTHOUGH HE HAS NOT REPLACED THOSE WITH WEST NILERS. RATHER, HE HAS LEFT THE POSITIONS VACANT.

4. THE MOVES AMIN MADE AGAINST MILITARY AND POLICE PERSONNEL SHOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH. TODAY AMIN COULD, IF HE WANTED, PROCLAIM HIMSELF EMPEROR CONSIDERING THE LACK OF OPPOSITION HE WOULD FACE. ALL IS NOT COMPLETELY SMOOTH, HOWEVER, WITHIN THE WEST NILE COALITION. THERE HAVE BEEN INDICATIONS OF STRAIN BETWEEN THE LUGBARA, THE LARGEST WEST NILE GROUP, AND AMIN'S KAKWA. IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT ANY SINGLE TRIBAL GROUP, SUCH AS THE LUGBARA, COULD BRING AMIN DOWN ALONE, BUT, ACTING IN CONCERT WITH ONE OR MORE SIZEABLE TRIBAL GROUPS FROM ANY AREA, THE COALITION MIGHT SUCCEED. IT IS PROBABLY SUCH A POSSIBILITY AS THIS THAT AMIN FEARS.

5. WITH THE MILITARY UNDER CONTROL, AMIN STILL HAS THE PROBLEM OF THE ELITE. BECAUSE OF THEIR POSITION IN UGANDA SOCIETY, THEY EITHER ARE THEMSELVES INFLUENTIAL OR ARE IN A POSITION OF STRONG INFLUENCE WITH THE ELDERS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE TRIBES. AMIN DOES NOT NEED TO ELIMINATE WHOLE TRIBES TO INSURE HIS CONTROL; HE NEEDS ONLY TO ELIMINATE THEIR

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LEADERSHIP. IF THAT LEADERSHIP HAPPENS TO CORRESPOND WITH THE ECONOMIC AND INTELLECTUAL BACKBONE OF THE COUNTRY, IT MAKES LITTLE DIFFERENCE TO AMIN. IT IS INCREASINGLY EVIDENT THAT HIS EXTREMELY ELEMENTARY CONCEPT OF ECONOMICS AND GOVERNMENT SIMPLY DOES NOT PERMIT HIM TO UNDERSTAND THAT DESTROYED TALENT CANNOT BE REPLACED OVERNIGHT OR EVEN IN A GENERATION. THE EXPELLED ASIANS REPRESENT MOST OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL EXPERTISE TO BE FOUND IN UGANDA AND SOME KEY ASIAN TECHNICIANS ARE NOW BEING TURNED BACK AT THE AIRPORT, BUT MANY GOT AWAY EARLY. IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE PRESENT PURGE WOULD NOT HAVE REACHED ANYWHERE NEAR ITS PRESENT LEVEL OF INTENSITY IF IT HAD NOT BEEN FOR THE ABORTIVE OBOTE-SPONSORED INVASION. IT APPEARS THAT THE INVASION MAY HAVE FRIGHTENED AMIN SUFFICIENTLY TO MAKE HIM DECIDE TO GET HIS HOUSE INTO WHAT HE CONCEIVES TO BE THE PROPER ORDER, A SOCIETY IN WHICH HIS TRIBE AND ITS ALLIES ARE IN TOTAL CONTROL.

6. THE REALLY PUZZLING THING IS THAT AMIN HAS BEEN ABLE TO GET AWAY WITH THE PRACTICE OF THIS PHILOSOPHY FOR SO LONG. IF HE HAS NOT ALREADY DONE SO, HE MAY BE ABLE TO CONSOLIDATE HIS HOLD AND KEEP IT INDEFINITELY. THE ACHOLI, WITH ORIGINALLY THE GREATEST STRENGTH IN THE ARMY AND POLICE AND, ACCORDING TO THEIR CLAIMS, THE GREATEST MARTIAL TRADITION OF ANY TRIBE IN UGANDA, HAVE LET THEMSELVES BE SELECTIVELY
5 SLAUGHTERED TO THE POINT THAT THEY WILL SOON HAVE NO LEADERSHIP LEFT. 5
4 THE LANGO NEVER HAD A CHANCE; THEY HAD MADE THEMSELVES SO THOROUGHLY 4
3 HATED DURING THE OBOTE PERIOD THAT THE OTHER TRIBES WERE QUITE HAPPY TO 3
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STAND BY AND SEE THEM CUT TO RIBBONS BY THE WEST NILERS. THE ITESOT ARE SOMEWHAT OF AN ENIGMA. THERE ARE STILL MANY OF THEM IN THE ARMY, BUT THEY HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN SO BEMUSED BY WATCHING THEIR ANCIENT ENEMIES, THE LANGO AND THE ACHOLI, GET IT IN THE NECK, THAT IT HAS NOT OCCURRED TO THEM THAT THEY MIGHT BE NEXT. EXCEPT FOR THE BAGANDA, NONE OF THE OTHER TRIBES APPEAR TO HAVE ENOUGH STRENGTH TO BE A PROBLEM FOR AMIN, ALTHOUGH THE WAY THE SAMIA ARE SUFFERING THEY MUST HAVE DONE SOMETHING WRONG.

7. ONE COULD THINK OF THE BAGANDA AS THE BENGALIS OF UGANDA, TRADITIONALLY USING GUILE INSTEAD OF GUNS, BUT EVEN THE BENGALIS PRODUCED THE MUKTI BAHINI, EAST PAKISTANI'S INDIGENOUS GUERRILLAS WHO FORMED AN EFFECTIVE FIGHTING FORCE AGAINST THE WEST PAKISTANIS. IT MAY BE THAT THE BAGANDA HAVE BECOME USED TO BEING TRAMPLED UPON AND ARE PUTTING HOPE FOR INDIVIDUAL SURVIVAL FIRST, AS ALL THEIR POTENTIAL ALLIES SEEM TO BE DOING.

8. WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW IN UGANDA HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH COLONIALISM, NATIONALISM, OR EAST-WEST IDEOLOGY. IT IS RAW TRIBALISM AT WORK, WITH THE CHIEF OF A MINOR TRIBE (THE CHAKA-ZULU SITUATION AGAIN) ON HIS WAY TO SUBJUGATING AND CONTROLLING THE NEIGHBORING TRIBES. UNLIKE CHAKA, AMIN HAS THE LIMITATION OF INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES WITH WHICH TO CONTEND. SINCE HE ONCE MOOTED THE IDEA OF EXTENDING HIS FRONTIER THROUGH NORTHERN TANZANIA TO INCLUDE THE PORT OF TANGA, HOWEVER, PERHAPS THE BORDERS DO NOT MEAN MUCH TO HIM.

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